

MINUTES OF THE NEBRASKA NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

MARCH 25, 2004

Those in attendance were:

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| Beverly Donaldson, Chair | Nelson Carpenter | Linda Hillen |
| Vince Kramper, Member | Stan Staab | Eugene Heitz |
| Roger Korell, Member | Ken Berney | Mary Ann Schroeder |
| Wayne Madsen, Member | Milton Moravek | Frankie Charipar |
| Jim Van Marter, Member | Gary Lewis | Darlene Charipar |
| Richard Jiskra, Member | Mike Sotak | Len Schropfer |
| Joseph Hergott, Member | Bob Wolf | Curt Hill |
| Dan Watermeier, Member | Mike Murren | Judy Loseke |
| Clint Johannes, Member | Dorothy Hillen | Don Moses |
| LeRoy Pieper, Member | Shaun Heitz | Jim Cook, Staff |
| Richard Hadenfeldt, Member | Allen Schroeder | Tom Pesek, Staff |
| Don Roberts, Member | Marty Klein | Gayle Starr, Staff |
| Arlond Garratt, Member | Jerry Sandeen | |
| Keith Rexroth, Member | Lalit Jha | |
| Garry Anderson, Member | Justin Stine | |
| Steve Oltmans | Elden Wesely | |
| Marlin Petermann | Steve Mossman | |

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Commission Chair, Beverly Donaldson, in the conference room of the Lower Platte South NRD in Lincoln, Nebraska at approximately 9:00 a.m.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING

Notice of the meeting was placed in the LINCOLN JOURNAL & STAR on March 17, 2004, notifying the public of the meeting.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL

The following items of informational material were distributed during the course of the meeting and a copy of each is attached to the file copy of the minutes.

1. Minutes of the Legislative & Budget Committee Meeting.
2. Minutes of the Comprehensive Planning Committee Meeting.
3. Water Well Decommissioning Cash Fund Summary.
4. Nebraska Resources Development Fund Present Financial Status.
5. Letter from Marty Klein, Chair of Winslow Village Board on the Winslow Flood Protection Levee Project
6. Letter from Papio-Missouri River NRD on Western Sarpy/Clear Creek Flood Reduction Project.
7. Status of Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund.
8. Soil & Water Conservation Fund – Expenditures by Month, 1995-2004.
9. Republican Basin Water Meter Program.
10. Natural Resources Water Quality Fund and Distributions.
11. Water Well Decommissioning Cash Fund.
12. NRCS Report to the NNRC and NARD.

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MINUTES

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Motion was made by Kramper and seconded by Anderson to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2004 Commission meeting as distributed. Motion carried.

Aye: Watermeier, Van Marter, Madsen, Kramper, Pieper, Roberts, Garratt, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Anderson, Hergott, Jiskra, Korell, Rexroth, Donaldson

Nay: None

Not Present: Davis

EXPENDITURES

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Gayle Starr noted that the Expenditure Report for January and February, 2004 had been distributed to Commission members and he briefly reviewed the expenditure categories.

ADVISOR'S COMMENTS

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Doug Christensen, Assistant State Conservationist for NRCS briefly commented on several NRCS programs and distributed a handout regarding watershed rehabilitation, which he briefly reviewed.

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Gayle Starr noted that Roger Patterson was in Washington, DC and could not be present for the Commission meeting. He noted that an individual had been hired (Pat Diederich) to head the Dam Safety program and that about 50 applications have been received for the agency Legal Counsel position and those applications are being reviewed and some applicants will be interviewed in mid-April.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST

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Vince Kramper noted that the next meeting would be on April 5 when about six million dollars of grants are to be awarded. Kramper added that the Trust Board is looking at ways to simplify applications and to establish some uniform standards for applications.

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PLATTE & REPUBLICAN RIVER ACTIVITIES

Jim Cook noted that the Environmental Impact Statement for Endangered Species on the Platte River had been released. He added that the National Academy of Sciences review has not yet been completed and it is hoped that their report would be released before the completion of the review period on the Environmental Impact Statement. He added that technical work needed to comply with the Republican River settlement is continuing but that there are no significant new developments.

WATER POLICY TASK FORCE

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It was noted that LB962 containing the recommendations of the Water Policy Task Force has been advanced to select file and designated a super priority bill so that it will likely be acted on by the Legislature yet this year. It was also noted that a number of other water related bills considered to be non-controversial have been amended into LB962.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

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Dan Watermeier noted that Tom Pesek had distributed the Resources Development Fund Status Report and quarterly report at the committee meeting and had reviewed them in some detail. He added that the committee was recommending action be taken to obligate funds for the Winslow Levee Project. Motion was made by Watermeier and seconded by Kramper to obligate funds for the Winslow Levee Project effective immediately as follows: Component No.1: Feasibility Study - \$21,750.00;

Component No. 2: Final Design, Geo-technical & Mapping - \$40,415.25 for a total of \$62,165.25. Motion carried.

Aye: Van Marter, Madsen, Kramper, Pieper, Roberts, Garratt, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Anderson, Hergott, Jiskra, Korell, Rexroth, Watermeier, Donaldson

Nay: None

Not Present: Davis

Beverly Donaldson noted that the next three agenda items would involve presentations on Resources Development Fund projects by project sponsors and that some other individuals had asked to speak with regard to the Leigh Dam Project application. She asked that those wishing to speak keep their comments brief and not be repetitive. She also noted that these were only briefings for the Commission and no action would be taken by the Commission on any of the three projects.

Steve Oltmans, Marlin Petermann, and Nelson Carpenter all briefed the Commission on the increased cost estimates for the Western Sarpy/Clear Creek Project and responded to questions. Oltmans noted that the sponsors would be requesting an increased allocation and obligation of funds at the May Commission meeting.

Milton Moravek, representing the Central Platte NRD, and Gary Lewis, an engineering consultant for the NRD, reviewed their application for Resources Development funds for the Upper Prairie/Silver/Moores Creek Project. It was noted that this was a new application that had just been received and would be reviewed by the staff and a recommendation from the Director would be submitted at the completion of the review.

Stan Staab, representing the Lower Elkhorn NRD and Mike Sotak, the NRD's engineering consultant, reviewed the Leigh Dam Project application and responded to questions. It was noted that this was also a new application that would be reviewed by the staff and the director would be submitting a recommendation at the completion of the review.

Steve Mossman, representing a group of project opponents commented on the project and explained their reasons for opposition. He also distributed some information for Commission members.

Alan Schroeder and Frankie Charipar both spoke in support of the project outlining their reasons for support.

It was noted that status reports on the Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund, Soil & Water Conservation Fund, Natural Resources Water Quality Fund, and Water Well Decommissioning Fund had been distributed at the Program Committee and reviewed at that time.

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LEGISLATIVE & BUDGET COMMITTEE

Richard Hadenfeldt noted that Jim Cook had briefed the committee on pending legislation that would affect the Department of Natural Resources, the Commission, or Natural Resources Districts. He added that the committee was recommending action with regard to only one item. Motion was made by Hadenfeldt and seconded by Van Marter to recommend that the Commission oppose LR 209CA. Motion carried.

Aye: Madsen, Kramper, Pieper, Roberts, Garratt, Johannes, Hadenfeldt, Anderson, Hergott, Jiskra, Korell, Rexroth, Watermeier, VanMarter, Donaldson

Nay: None

Not Present: Davis

Hadenfeldt also noted that Gayle Starr had briefed the committee on the proposed reductions to the Department's budget that are being considered to address the state's budget shortfall. He added that a summary of that information is attached to the committee minutes.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Garry Anderson noted that at the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting, Jennifer Schellpeper had made a presentation regarding a recently completed report on hydrologically connected ground and surface water in the North Platte Natural Resources District.

Anderson added that Steve Gaul had advised the committee that the multi-year process of completing SSURGO digital soils

information for the entire state should be completed within the next month.

Rex Gittens and Steve Rathje provided a demonstration of mapping capabilities that the agency is participating in as part of a national program. Rathje also explained the department's new metadata system and the Natural Resources Data clearinghouse, which is also part of the national system.

NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the staff would be working with the Central Platte NRD to schedule the May Commission meeting in Grand Island in connection with a dedication of the Wood River/Upper Warm Slough Project and a field trip of the Upper Prairie/Silver/Moores Creek Project.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:25 a.m.

Chair

Director of Natural Resources

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